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*Aspects of the Social Problem.* By Various Writers. Edited by BERNARD BOSANQUET. London and New York, Macmillan & Co., 1895. — x, 332 pp.

Here is a book of vigorous thinking born of actual experience in social fields. Its pages abound in sound sense, scientific insight and practical suggestion. There is a great deal in it of what many are now feeling after, that is, something to help them to define and grasp the social problem in its essential nature. From it we get the impression that the leaven of right thinking and feeling—the one condition of all genuine reform—is working its way through English life on matters social. If these contributions are really typical of the way in which social England is regarded by her writers, then one may rest assured that such men as Matthew Arnold and Huxley have had much to do with this result of disencrusting the social spirit and giving direction to the released energy of life in the social policy of the England of to-day.

Mr. Bosanquet, the editor of the volume, contributes six of its papers; seven are by Mr. H. Dendy, two by Mr. H. M'Callum, and three by Mr. C. S. Loch. Of the eighteen papers comprising the book, nine have appeared in periodicals and nine are new. All are timely; not a single one is used for padding. A sentence from the preface gives the key-idea of the book: "In social reform character is the condition of conditions . . . though it should be definitely recognized as the extreme of folly to despise the material conditions of life." The point of view common to all the writers is this, that to a great extent the social problem is the problem of the poor, and that they who work with and for the poor should enter into their thoughts and feelings so as to comprehend their lives from all sides. The first two essays by Mr. Bosanquet, on the "Duties of Citizenship," and the last three, on "The Principle of Private Property," "The Reality of the General Will" and "Socialism and Natural Selection," all help to unfold the social problem in its wider and deeper connections with other commanding issues. The author finds the historic character of citizenship given in the typical Greek communities of ancient times. The civic spirit, to which modern democracy is giving revival, is the domain of the common good, in the light of which it was the great duty of Hellenic citizens to adjust and exercise their lives. Instead of the simple and homogeneous community of the ancients the modern wilderness of interests has come, disturbing and breaking up the life of the state into a vast variety of corporate and social centers for which we have as yet found no simple principle of unity,

except that of law backed by the force of majority. This is our problem: to find and live the type of life that is healthy and sound for the good of the community or state. In the other essays the editor does some encouraging work in social psychology. The chapters on "Character in its Bearing on Social Causation" and "The General Will" are suggestive of Wundt, and are both clear contributions to scientific sociology.

"The Industrial Residuum" is a study made on the spot. It deals with that type of character which is but an incoherent jumble of negative qualities—a mass of social wreckage. To define membership in this class of impotent folk, Mr. Dendy takes some fundamental characteristic of the individual, some disposition or habit which determines his industrial behavior. This characteristic he finds, not exactly as Marshall does, in the incapacity to do "a good day's work," but rather in an insuperable aversion to continuous work, shown by the disposition to "drop out"—a condition favored, though not necessarily caused, by the existence of "busy seasons" or industrial spurts in special occupations. Another characteristic is a low order of intellect, unreliable as to its information about even the commonest facts of life; finally there is always present a degradation of the natural affections, marked by absence of all feeling of responsibility between parents and children and brothers and sisters. This analysis is accompanied, however, by an abiding confidence on the part of the author in the social arrangements in which these incapables believe and manage to exist. Another study of Mr. Dendy's is a valuable aid to our understanding of the real social situation. His "Children of Working London" might be taken as a model report for a legislative committee. It is a brief, luminous, suggestive presentation of a mass of facts. The author begins by observing children in five or six back-yards in a block of working-men's dwellings, from which he enters fully into the real life of childhood among the laboring classes of the chosen block. He finds its sources of enjoyment, its indifference and its misery—why it fails and wherein its shortcomings consist as a social element. In this light he criticises the schools, the sanitary policy, the factory employers and inspectors, so far as they conduce to this result.

The two contributions of Mr. M'Callum, on "The Protection of Children" and "Some Aspects of Reform," are both historical and critical. In the latter we have something solidly hopeful. The wholesome faith asserts itself here, as throughout these papers, that after all our devisings "to do something" for those who have fallen

short in the struggle for existence, the family life of the English people is still the ark of the sanctuary, and that the hope of social betterment lies in strengthening the resources of this mainstay of social independence both from within and from without. This, in brief, is the creed of the new, yet old, reform of which this book is a positive exponent.

As illustrative of methods of sociological investigation these essays are an earnest of the good results that come from a study of types as the means of insight into attending conditions. One of the best examples is Mr. Loch's paper on "Returns as an Instrument in Social Science." This gives the first clear indication of the right way of escape from too confiding reliance on statistics as our main instrument for social investigation. The elaboration of the type by the descriptive study of important cases has long been the method of the naturalist, and it is bound to triumph in sociology if logic and observation have anything to say to it. This is the method by which all the most valuable studies in this volume have been worked out — by the method of types, which is primary, rather than by the method of statistics, which is secondary in social science.

All these papers indicate familiarity with current literature and programs of reform in England. Several papers treat quite fully of the leading practices and proposals in public notice relative to private charity and public relief; the central theme of discussion is still the Poor Law; "Marriage in East London" is a study with a ghastly aspect; "Women's Position in Industry" is a summary of conditions brought out by the report of the Royal Commission on Labor. The various plans for old-age pensions are ably discussed by Mr. Loch. The preventability of old-age dependence is shown to be increasingly practicable even as things exist. The whole issue is declared to lie between the historic policy of social independence as the end of pauper administration, and the policy of social dependence of a possibly increasing class through any scheme of pensioning. The former relies on a preventive condition of personal character, family connections and the workhouse to check and cure the evil; the latter on quick, costly expedients, in the use of which we have no experience.

Taken altogether, the book is a competent summing up of the social problem as the last few years have developed it in English experience, from the conservative but intelligent and sympathetic worker's point of view.

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